

**Remarks on the conduct and duties of young physicians : addressed to the Edinburgh medical graduates of 1842 ... / by James Y. Simpson.**

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REMARKS  
ON THE  
CONDUCT AND DUTIES  
OF  
YOUNG PHYSICIANS;

ADDRESSED TO  
THE EDINBURGH MEDICAL GRADUATES OF 1842,  
ON THE OCCASION OF THEIR RECEIVING THEIR  
MEDICAL DEGREE,  
AT THE ANNUAL PUBLIC MEETING OF THE SENATUS ACADEMICUS OF THE  
UNIVERSITY, HELD ON THE 1ST AUGUST.

BY  
JAMES Y. SIMPSON, M.D. EDIN.,  
PROFESSOR OF MIDWIFERY IN THE UNIVERSITY; ETC., ETC.

EDINBURGH:  
MACLACHLAN, STEWART, AND CO., SOUTH BRIDGE.

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REMARKS

CONDUCT AND DUTIES

YOUNG PHYSICIANS

THE SCOTTISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION OF 1845

BALFOUR AND JACK, PRINTERS.

JAMES Y. SIMPSON, M.D.

EDINBURGH

WALKER'S STREET AND SOUTH BRIDGE

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THE first paragraph of the following Address sufficiently explains the origin of it. On the occasion on which it was delivered, eighty-seven Candidates had conferred upon them, by the authority of the Very Reverend Principal of the University, the degree of Doctor in Medicine, after they had previously passed with success through a severe and searching examination, with regard to their knowledge of all the different departments of Medical Science and Practice. It has been suggested that the Address, in its present more permanent shape, might prove of greater advantage to those gentlemen for whose sakes it was originally written, and perhaps be not altogether useless to others situated under similar circumstances. It contains but a very rough and meagre outline of a very important and extensive subject—the conduct and duties which ought to be pursued by young Medical men on finishing their prescribed Curriculum of academical studies, and entering upon the cares and responsibilities of Practice. The Author would feel delighted if the present imperfect sketch should be fortunate enough to induce some older and better qualified member of the profession to discuss in full the different parts of a subject on which a proper “Guide-Book” is so much wanted by his younger brethren.

EDINBURGH, 22 ALBANY STREET,  
3d August 1842.

all of us could, with heartfelt regret, recount the names of some, who, commencing their studies along with you, might perhaps have been sharers in the joys and honours of this hour, had they not perished in their careers under the dangers to which the very nature of their calling exposed them—noble, but alas! young and early sacrifices at the shrine of professional duty. During the few moments, however, which we are yet to spend together, I would speak not of the past but of the future,—not in regard to what you have already done and encountered as professional students, but of what still awaits you as professional practitioners,—not of the mode in which you have conducted yourselves *heretofore*, but of the mode in which you ought to conduct yourselves *hereafter*.

First of all, there is one opinion of primary importance, because of primary danger, (an opinion that I fear is only too common amongst you), against the spell of whose blighting influence I would warn and guard you with all the earnestness of the most heartfelt conviction. Many of you imagine that, with the present attainment of medical honours, all your medical learning and labours are at once to cease;—that with your diplomas in your possession, you may henceforth banish all professional books and investigations from your thoughts;—that you leave these walls, not practical tyros, but proficient in every kind of professional acquirements. No idea could be more groundless and unsound—no error could be more fatal to your future prospects and progress in life. This day is to be dated as the

day of the true commencement, rather than of the true consummation of your professional studies and exertions. It is, at best, but a momentary halt after the first and easiest stage in the journey of professional life; and your march onward must be one not of diminished but of redoubled energy and diligence.

The medical practitioner should never cease to be the medical student. His whole course must be one of continued and accumulating instruction and research. The vast importance as well as the vast extent and rapid march of our profession demand it. During the period of your academic studies we, as your teachers, have endeavoured to initiate you in all the more leading principles and details of medical science, but the elaboration of the work can be accomplished by no efforts except your own; we have laid in your minds a sure, and, as we humbly trust, a solid foundation of professional knowledge, but the superstructure we must leave to be finished and adorned by your own individual zeal—your own individual industry—and your own individual talents.

If there is, therefore, any single truth which you ought to engrave “upon the table of your hearts” more deeply than another, it is this,—that if you aspire after professional distinction—and who amongst you does not?—*you must assiduously enrich and extend your store of professional knowledge by continued and constant observation, reflection, and reading.* Let no opportunities escape you of personally watching and studying for yourselves the diversified phenomena and results of morbid action and of remedies. And though you are henceforth to practise medicine as an art, and as a source of pecuniary

emolument, still I beseech you, continue to look upon, and love, and investigate every part of it with all the ardour and zeal of a science. Do not suppose (as has been often alleged,) that the study of practical medicine as a department of scientific knowledge, is in any respect incompatible with the exercise of practical medicine as a department of professional gain. It is totally the reverse. The more you know of disease—the more deeply and enthusiastically you study its phenomena—the greater will be the interest which you will take in every ailment submitted to your charge, in every symptom of it, and in every change in it,—an interest certainly altogether independent of, and immeasurably above the incentive of pecuniary reward, but one that is still in itself the surest ultimate road to that very result, because it is the surest means to bind you to your patients with all that zeal and devotion, that is so properly considered by the public as alone worthy of such reward.

In struggling onwards towards fame and fortune in the practice of your art, *place from the first all your hopes of advancement upon the breadth and extent of your medical abilities alone.* If any of you have the foolishness and temerity to trust for professional success to other means, be assured that you are embarking your hopes in frail and faithless vessels. I would advise no one amongst you to say unto princes, “Hold out of my sun;” but I would strenuously counsel you not on any account to look upon their smiles and favours as an only and an all-sufficient light to guide your footsteps forwards.

Rather walk by the steady light of your own lamp than by the more dazzling but, to you, more uncertain lustre borrowed from that of others. The patronage of power and wealth may advance your prospects to some extent, but—without genuine professional talents—they can never advance you far, and they can never advance you with certainty. Let me strongly forewarn you against one frequent error. Young physicians often dream that by extending the circle of their private acquaintances, they thus afford themselves the best chance of extending the circle of their private patients. In following out this chimerical view, much invaluable time is frequently lost, and—what is worse—habits of pleasure and indolence are often, with fatal effect, substituted for those habits of study and exertion that are above all price. No man will in any case of doubt or danger entrust to your professional care the guardianship of his own life, or of the life of those who are near and dear to his heart, merely because you happen to be on terms of intimacy with him. The self-interest of human nature forbids it. To have professional faith and confidence in you, he must respect you in your calling as a physician, and not merely in your character as a social friend and acquaintance. The qualities for which he might esteem you in the latter capacity are often the reverse of those which would induce him to confide in you in the former.

I repeat, therefore, that if you dream of making patients by making friends, you will utterly delude yourselves, and damage your own prospects. By your undivided devotion to your profession, labour



to create for yourselves a sound and just medical reputation,—and that reputation will create for you patients. Make it thus an object with the public not so much to employ you for your interest and advantage, as to employ you for their interest and their advantage. Commit your fortunes to your medical knowledge and talents, and not to any empty mannerism, or any servility, affectation, or singularity of conduct. And do not suppose that you can promote your success by any other than purely medical pursuits. In proportion as you raise your reputation by any adventitious and extra-professional accomplishments and studies, do you lower your chances of success as practical physicians. Such, at least, is the almost invariable verdict of the public. Give, therefore, your whole energies to medicine, and in its multiplied departments you will find “ample room and verge enough” for the most energetic as well as the most comprehensive mind. Place your faith in no extrinsic influences. Let your own professional character be the one great patron to whom you ever look for professional advancement.

*In entering upon the active duties of Medical Practitioners, form your earlier habits of business and study with anxious and watchful care.*

Every man has the power of forming what habits he will. The same duties, however irksome in the first instance, when gone over resolutely and uninterruptedly day after day at the same time, are soon, by their mere periodic repetition, converted from tasks into fixed habits and sources of pleasure. Their non-performance at last, will, like their very per-

formance at first, become matter of pain and disquietude.

The habits that you will individually form for the next few years, will continue engraven and impressed upon you for the remainder of life. Choose and constitute them, therefore, with the most solicitous care and anxiety, under the strong and certain recollection that they are for the future to be your great guides and companions, either for good or for evil,—for your success or your failure in the high duties and destinies of life.

*Above all, teach yourselves carefully to save your time, and to methodize all your pursuits.*

The two great commodities which the physician carries into the mart of the world to barter for the goods of life, are his professional knowledge or advice, and his time. I have urged upon you to enlarge the quantity and enrich the quality of the former, and in order to accomplish this great object, let me now solicit you to save and economise the latter. Let your time be a property of which you are truly avaricious, and of every item of it be able to render to yourself a proper reckoning. It is by carefully preserving, conjoining, and making diligent use of these broken and disjointed portions of it, which others thoughtlessly waste and destroy, that almost all the highest reputations in the medical profession have been formed.

If any one amongst you will only assiduously save up every odd moment and otherwise lost item of it for the next twenty years, and properly use these gains, you will have snatched, from perhaps utter waste, time enough to work out for yourself almost

any reasonable reputation that the emulous ambition of your heart may aspire after. You may thus have actually lived, at the age of thirty or forty, a life much longer than he who has already numbered his three score years and ten. In one single particular, it has been calculated that the simple difference between rising at six and nine o'clock in the morning, for the space of forty years, is nearly equivalent to the addition of fifteen years to a man's life!

He who has the proper covetousness of time in his heart, will find out, during the remainder of the day, innumerable other opportunities of contributing to his own saving stock of it, by adding thereto many other moments and fragments which the world at large are profligately and recklessly casting away from them.

Never lull your mind into listless idleness by the self-deceit that you have no spare hours on your hands for this or for that professional pursuit. Look around the profession, and you will find that those who have most to do in the way of business as practitioners, have also apparently the most time to spare as observers and writers, in contributing to the literature, and advancing the knowledge both of our science and art. In their engagements with their professional brethren and others, they are as punctual as the shadow on the dial-plate. And why? Because they have all their daily duties properly assorted and arranged; they save from loss and destruction every possible fragment of time; and their very industry and precision procures them more true leisure than indolence can boast of.

Follow out, therefore, all your professional duties

in a determinate order. Lay down each morning a plan for the business of the day, and adhere to that plan as far as your professional avocations will admit;—never postpone to a subsequent hour, and far less to a subsequent day, any duties which you may at the moment easily accomplish;—and above all, guard against allowing any incidental pursuits to encroach upon those that are strictly professional. Do every thing at its proper season, and you will have time to do every thing slowly and well. Have a duty for every time, and you will have time for every duty.

I have been advising you to learn not to fritter away your time. If your object be high professional distinction and success, let me advise you, if possible still more strenuously, *not to fritter away your thoughts*. It was long ago beautifully observed by Barrow, that “the spirits employed in thought, are apt to flutter and fly away, so that it is hard to fix them; our mind being a restless thing never abiding in a total cessation from thought, or from design; and, like a ship in the sea, if not steered to some good purpose by reason, making no useful way, but yet tossed by the waves of fancy, or driven by the winds of temptation somewhither.”

To make decided and useful progress in our professional calling and pursuits as physicians, we must have a perfect power of fixing at will these fluttering spirits of thought, and of steadily steering that “restless thing” in whatever direction we may desire. At all times, on all occasions, and amidst all the numerous disturbing influences to which the medical man is so constantly subjected, he should be able to

control and command his undivided mental attention to the case or object that he may have before him. In the prosecution of any department of science, as well as in the practice of any department of art which, like medicine, requires a constant exercise of observation, reflection, and judgment—the power and habit of closely and continuously thinking upon the subject in hand, to the exclusion, for the time, of all other subjects,—is one of the principal—if not the principal secret of success. In the power of concentrating and keeping concentrated all the energies of attention and thought upon any given matter, consists the power of thinking soundly, strongly, and successfully upon it. The possession or the want of this quality of the mind constitutes the main distinction between the possession or the want of what the world designates—mental abilities and talents.

The intellectual vessel is (if I may follow out the metaphor suggested in the words that I have just quoted from Barrow,) not so very different in different men in its original building and materials,—as in the labour, care, and watchfulness with which it is stored and fitted out by education for the voyage of life,—in the vigilance and skill with which it is worked and conducted onward in its progress over the rough sea of the world,—and, most especially of all, in the undeviating steadiness with which it is steered by the hand of discipline in steady courses of utility and importance—or allowed by idleness and neglect, to toss about at the mercy of every passing thought, ever in motion, but never moving in any direct or profitable track. Sir

Isaac Newton, (the immortal pupil of Barrow,) whose mighty genius and sagacity of mind has since fixed upon him the admiration and wonder of his race, modestly averred, that his superiority, if any, consisted, in his own opinion, only of unusual powers of patient thought and industry. The unparalleled greatness in the results of his thoughts was owing, according to his own interpretation, merely to his habit of unparalleled patience and assiduity in the exercise of thinking. With probably more truth, Dr Armstrong observed, that "genius in a medical man is nothing more than the *habit* of patient observation and reflection." This habit of strong mental attention and intense mental activity, is one which all of you should struggle diligently to increase and improve, and you may all increase and improve it, for in every man the habit itself is more a conquest gained by self-discipline, than a quality conferred by nature,—it is more an acquired than an original power and attribute of the mind,—its varieties in different individuals, are more the result of varieties in our mental education, than of varieties in our mental constitution.

*Ever cautiously guard against either your mind or body being degraded into that most debasing of all slavery—the self-slavery of indolence. Do not vainly flatter yourselves, as is too often done by the young members of our profession, that, in the chances of our calling, fortune may, while you still repose in drowsy sloth and idleness, search you out in order to lay her gifts at your feet. To obtain these gifts you must arise and actively pursue her.*

Industry and diligence are the only offerings on your part for which either fortune or fame will exchange with you the riches of their rewards. No certain advance to a high professional standing can be made except it be purchased by the free expenditure of such coin and currency.

If any of you ever come to speak of your expectations and prospects always withering under the evil eye of a luckless fate, be assured beforehand that you are only, in disguised terms, so far confessing to yourselves and to others your own apathy and misconduct. Misfortune and mismanagement are terms much more synonymous in reality than mankind in general will believe. In all our worldly pursuits, as in all our professional studies, we are liable to be conquered, more by our own supineness than by the difficulties of our undertakings—more by ourselves than by our subjects. You are each endowed with the proper elements of success, if you will only properly use them. If you labour honourably, diligently, and indefatigably in your calling, few or none of you will find cause for ultimate complaint. “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.” Do not wait for special and favourable circumstances, but work always as if special and favourable circumstances were already actually present. Do not withhold your blows till the iron is heated, but “strike it till it becomes hot.” Never spare yourselves in your efforts. The finished and perfect statue can only be elaborated from the block by hundreds and thousands of patient and assiduous strokes of the chisel. Your professional character and knowledge can only be ela-

borated by a similar course of unremitting diligence and labour. In medicine, as in other avocations, be assured that no man ever reached, and that no man ever can reach great reputation and great excellence without great exertion. With the necessary exertion the humblest amongst you are certain to rise;—without it, the highest amongst you are as certain to fall.

*In starting on the journey of active life, plant before your mind's eye an exalted standard of professional excellence, as a high, and, it may be, distant land-mark which you predetermine to strain every nerve to reach.* If you thus set an exalted mark before you, the very elevation of your aim will impart a corresponding elevation of tone and character to all your motives and actions. You may fail in entirely reaching the high goal before you, but the very effort to reach it will add to the vigour of your professional powers and reputation. You cannot all be Hunters and Bells, Cullens and Thomsons, Abercrombies and Alisons, but you may all be greater and more distinguished men than you otherwise would be, if you will hold their noble examples in view, and emulate their habits of indefatigable application and industry. And be not dismayed by apparent difficulties in the road to professional distinction. Let these difficulties not enervate, but rather stimulate you onwards with powers re-excited and sharpened by their very opposition. The timorous and irresolute only are intimidated and daunted by them. There are few or no obstacles that will not disappear before determined industry and intrepidity. Like shadowy and



unsubstantial phantoms will they vanish from your path, if you have only the moral boldness to confront and grapple with them. They will fly before your steady and onward progress, as the "visible horizon flies before the advance of the traveller. A passionate desire and an unwearied will can perform impossibilities, or what seem to be such to the cold and the feeble. If you do but go on, some unforeseen path will open among the hills." The road before you to professional eminence may in some parts seem dangerous and forbidding, but it contains no obstructions sufficient to arrest or turn back the step of him who traverses it with a spirit of steady and settled resolution;—it may be long, but patience and perseverance are infallible passports through it;—and here, as elsewhere,—in yours as in other pursuits,—an unchangeable and indomitable determination to succeed is in itself the surest guide and conductor to ultimate success.

Hitherto, I have been calling upon you to enlarge and extend, by every means in your power, the sum of your professional knowledge, with a view to your own personal considerations and personal prospects. But there is another and a higher view under which I would beg to urge upon you the same considerations. You are to practise your profession now, not only under a sense of the duties which you owe to yourselves, but still more under a sense of the *higher and heavier duties which you owe to your patients.*

When the medical man first settles down in practice, he, by the mere act of this settlement,

enters into a kind of moral contract with those who are to become his patients. They, on their part, agree to entrust entirely to his professional care and keeping, property which, to them, is greater than the riches of Croesus—their health, namely, and their lives. He, on his part, pledges to protect and preserve for them these inestimable gifts, by all the best directed means that medical science has devised. Though it may be argued that

“ It is not writ so in the bond,”

yet the obligation is not the less real; the contract, though silent, is not the less solemn. It is a grave and inviolable bond of duty and conscience on the part of the practitioner,—one of faith and confidence on the part of the patient. See to it, therefore, that you are always prepared to fulfil perfectly and promptly your portion of the conditions of this important and rigorous mutual contract. Whatever is, under its seal, communicated to you as a matter of professional confidence, must ever remain buried within your own breasts in all the silence and secrecy of the grave. Whenever called upon for your aid, you are bound by duty, law, and honour, to obey the summons. If busied and immersed in any engagement, then must that engagement be instantly broken, unless it be purely a professional one. The time of the medical practitioner is at every moment at the command of every man except himself; it is not strictly his,—it belongs to his suffering fellow-creatures. He is altogether, in effect, more their property than his own. And be ever waiting and watching in full and complete readiness for the heavy

obligation of practical knowledge which your duty to your patients imposes on you. Keep your minds and thoughts always attuned to the exercise of your profession, and amply stored with every information that can be required. "*Erecti, citati, armati jam esse debemus.*" In all cases, your responsibility is great; in cases of doubt and danger, it often becomes fearfully so. The fellow-being whom you have persuaded to confide in you may then have his life saved by your professional knowledge, or sacrificed by your professional ignorance. Difficulties and sudden emergencies will constantly spring up around you. It is at these moments that you will find summoned at once into full play and force all the depth and soundness of your professional abilities and acquirements. Under such circumstances, it is only the *conviction* of a perfect knowledge of the nature and treatment of the case before you—as derived from a perfect previous study of, and acquaintance with it in all its varied details—that can impart to your minds all that calmness of self-possession, and all that promptitude of decision and of action that the exigency may demand;—it is such conviction alone that can properly direct and determine the measures of the physician, on those occasions, when the trembling balance of life and death is dependant on the very next step that he ventures to take;—it is such conviction alone that guides and steadies the hand of the surgeon in those trying moments, when danger and death hover around every touch of his knife.

*In the practice of your profession cherish and foster*

*within your hearts a spirit of true benevolence towards your patients and fellow-beings.*

Nature has happily ordained it as one of the great laws on which she has founded our moral happiness, that the performance of offices of love and kindness to others should be a genuine and never-failing source of pleasure to our own breasts. It is thus strictly as well as poetically true,

“That, seeking others’ good, we find our own.”

So strongly, indeed, is the promotion by us of the weal and happiness of other members of the family of man not less a great moral obligation than a great moral gratification—not less our duty than our reward—that some metaphysicians have believed that all practical virtue is ultimately resolvable into practical benevolence.

The exercise of the profession upon which you are about to enter is, when followed out in its proper spirit, a continued realization of active beneficence, and in this view a continued source of moral satisfaction and happiness to the generous heart. The objects and the powers of your art are alike great and elevated. Your aim is, as far as possible, to alleviate human suffering, and lengthen out human existence. Your ambition is to gladden as well as prolong the course of human life, by warding off disease as the greatest of mortal evils, and by restoring health, and even at times reason itself, as the greatest of mortal blessings.

If I may borrow the beautiful language of the Author of “The Village”—

"Glorious your aim,—to ease the labouring heart,  
 To war with death, and stop his flying dart;  
 To trace the source whence the fierce contest grew,  
 And life's short lease on easier terms renew;  
 To calm the frenzy of the burning brain,  
 And heal the tortures of imploring pain;  
 Or, when more powerful ills all efforts brave,  
 To ease the victim no device can save,  
 And smooth the stormy passage to the grave."

I repeat it,—if you follow out these the noble objects of your profession in a proper spirit of love and kindness to your race, the pure light of benevolence will shed around the path of your toils and labours a brightness and beauty, that will faithfully cheer you onwards, and keep your steps from being weary in well-doing—while, if you practise the art that you profess with a cold-hearted view to its results merely as a matter of lucre and trade, your course will be as dark and miserable, as that low and grovelling lust that dictates it. I make these remarks in relation to your practice and conduct as individual members of the profession. No one can question that, in this country at least, the character of the purest benevolence must be accorded to our profession as a whole. "Go," says an eloquent writer, "into the abodes of the sick, and the poor and deserted; wherever there is disease or distress, there will you find some medical practitioner exercising his glorious art,—patiently, freely, and fearlessly, for those whom poverty or vice, or the breath of the pestilence has deprived of every other friend. Or, again, follow him among the higher classes of patients, and you will find him there the friend and honest ad-

viser of those who can seldom hear truth from any other lips"—“ministering hope and comfort to the sick, reviving expiring life, or soothing the bed of death for the drooping spirit, by counteracting the depressing influence of those maladies that might otherwise rob the philosopher of his fortitude, and the Christian of his consolation.”

I have spoken of the duties which you owe to yourselves, and the duties you owe to your patients. If the limits of the present address had permitted, I would fain now have added a few observations on your *duties to your medical brethren*. In no walk is the young physician more apt to err, than in attempting to follow out the mutual rules of ethics and etiquette observed among medical men. The error may be from pure ignorance, and not from intention, but the verdict is always severe. Let me only state that here, as in other circumstances of life, you will find the beautiful and golden rule of “do unto others as you would have that others do unto you,” universally applicable. And let me counsel you, “if it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.” Never disparage the practice or the character of any one of your medical brethren;—never interfere in any way or on any account in the treatment of any patients except your own;—and whatever you do or say in the exercise and conduct of your calling, do it as if the eyes of the whole profession saw you,—speak it as if all their ears heard you.

On this matter permit me to add one word more:—ever guard against allowing feelings of professional invidiousness to instil their canker into your soul.

The gifts and rewards of the profession may be occasionally awarded by the public with injustice; but such adjudgment is certainly the exception and not the rule. If another happen to outstrip you in your professional course, let it rouse up within you, not a spirit of malicious envy, but a spirit of generous emulation;—let it lead not to feelings of repining and to relaxation in your efforts, but let it rather urge you onward with a stronger and more determined energy of action. Whatever ground you do gain, gain it by fair and open competition. Never allow the darker part of your nature to persuade you to the attempt of overtaking him who has distanced you in the race of life by any unjust efforts to lame the character, and thus diminish the speed of your adversary. And if such attempts are made by others upon you, have no dread of them,—if “you are armed strong in honesty,”—if you have pursued—what every man who respects either his own honour, or the honour of his profession must always pursue—a line, namely, of irreproachable truth, and unbending rectitude of conduct. “Be thou as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny.” In as far, however, as regards your personal feelings, the self-knowledge of your own pure uprightness and integrity will always serve you as an impenetrable panoply—“*robur et aes triplex*”—against the most sharp and cunning shafts that others may choose to aim at you,—the self-approval of your own conscience will be always to your own heart an infallible antidote against their poison;—and, again, as far as regards your worldly interests, rest assured of this,—that the world itself will seldom or never allow you to suffer from any

unjust attacks uttered by the tongue of professional slander,—or from any false detractions dictated by a mere spirit of “crooked malice.”

In recommending you, as I have now done, to cultivate earnestly, for your own professional reputation, and your own personal happiness, the higher intellectual and moral qualities of your nature, do not suppose that I ask you to accomplish what is *beyond* the might and compass of any one of you. All of you possess the requisite elements and powers for doing so; it is only necessary for you to exert them properly. All of you may so cultivate your minds, as to become useful and distinguished members of your profession. All of you may so cultivate your hearts, as to become virtuous and honoured members of society. Certainly neither the one object nor the other can be attained without vigorous efforts and resolute self-discipline on your part; but in these very efforts, and in that very discipline and its results, will you find for yourselves, a pure and constant well-spring of intellectual and moral enjoyment. The most certain path to happiness is the path of action and duty.

But I have already detained you too long with these rambling and desultory remarks. I will not venture to encroach further upon your time and patience, though the subjects I have already adverted to would of themselves require hours and days—not minutes, for their proper consideration and discussion. In the mean time, however, I must have done.



The fetters of academic discipline are now—and for ever—to be struck from you. You are about to pass from the closet of the student into the busy and bustling scenes of active life. The great city of the world is already throwing open her gates to receive you. Through that city you must now pass, “whether through its darkness or its splendour,—its profligacy or its virtue,—its misery or its happiness; and in it, all the honours of time and of immortality are to be gained or to be lost.” The avenues to its temples of fame and happiness are as open to you now, as they ever were to any of your predecessors. The approaches to them are, as heretofore, beset on either side by ten thousand temptations. Pursue earnestly and undeviatingly the direct course of Christian and professional duty, and then you need fear not. But tremble if you allow yourself to be drawn aside from it at any one point. Temptations that may at first lure you from your path with the “gentle hand of a grace or a pleasure,” will—if yielded to—soon hold you with the iron grasp of a giant. Your future career is a matter of your own selection; and will be regulated by the conduct which you choose to follow. That career may be one of happiness or of self-regret,—one of honour or of obscurity,—one of wealth or of poverty. During it the present fond hopes of professional fame and fortune that breathe in the breasts of all of you, may be won or lost,—may be fulfilled or falsified,—may be nobly realized or ignobly ruined.

The one or other result is, I repeat, not a matter of *chance*, but a matter of *choice* on your part. Your diligence and industry for the next few years

of your life will almost inevitably secure for you the one:—your apathy and indolence will almost inevitably entail upon you the other. May God in his infinite goodness enable you to select the wiser and the better path; and may you ever be found asking for and relying upon the arm of His omnipotence, as the only sure and steady guide of your footsteps through it; so that when the journey of life is drawing to its close, you may have it in your power to look—backwards upon time without remorse, and forwards upon eternity without fear. Such at least is the earnest and sincere hope of my Colleagues and myself in sending you out into the world as Practitioners; and such is the heartfelt wish and prayer with which I must (in as far as regards your official relations to us as Students) now bid you—Farewell.

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